AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended). A process for the preparation of a recombinant polypeptide, comprising the steps of

a) fermenting a prokaryotic host cell comprising a periplasm and being transformed with a recombinant expression system capable of effecting secretion of the polypeptide into the periplasm, ~~which~~ wherein the fermentation is performed in a fermentation medium under conditions such that the polypeptide is secreted into the periplasm of the host cell, and

b) interrupting the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth and maintaining it under defined conditions of temperature and pH prior to extraction.

Claim 2 (Original). A process according to claim 1, wherein the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is interrupted for a period of at least about one hour.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is interrupted for a period of about one hour to about 72 hours.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is interrupted for a period of about 12 hours to about 48 hours.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is interrupted for a period of about 12 hours, about 24 hours or about 48 hours.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the interruption of the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is performed at a temperature of about 2 °C to about 65 °C.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the interruption of the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is performed at a temperature of about 4 °C to about 25 °C.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the interruption of the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is performed at a temperature of about 4 °C, about 10 °C, about 15 °C, about 20 °C or about 25 °C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the pH value of the fermentation harvest broth is maintained between about 4 to about 10 during step b).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the pH value of the fermentation harvest broth is maintained between about 5 to about 9 during step b).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the pH value of the fermentation harvest broth is maintained between about 6 to about 8 during step b).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the pH value of the fermentation harvest broth is maintained at about 7 during step b).

Claim 13 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the further processing of the fermentation harvest broth is interrupted for a period of about 12 hours, about 24 hours or about 48 hours at a temperature of about 4 °C, about 10 °C, about 15 °C, about 20 °C or about 25 °C.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the fermentation harvest broth is concentrated prior to step b).

Claim 15 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the fermentation harvest broth is concentrated by centrifugation or microfiltration prior to step b).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein step b) is performed in the fermenter.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the prokaryotic host cell is a Gram-negative bacterium.

Claim 18 (Original). A process according to claim 17, wherein the Gram-negative bacterium is selected from the group consisting of *Escherichia sp., Pseudomonas sp., Enterobacter sp., Erwinia sp. , Campylobacter sp, Proteus sp. , Aeromonas sp.* and *Vitreoscilla sp.*

Claim 19 (Original). A process according to claim 17, wherein the Gram-negative bacterium is *Escherichia coli*.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the recombinant polypeptide is an antibody, a hormone or an immunomodulating agent.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the recombinant polypeptide is a growth hormone, a growth factor, an interferon, a cytokine, an enzyme, an enzyme inhibitor or an antibody fragment.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended). A process according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the recombinant polypeptide is a Fab- fragment, human growth hormone, interferon alpha-2b or granulocyte colony- stimulating factor.

Claim 23 (Cancelled).